(b) Total vendible pithead coal stock with Coal India Limited (CIL) as on 1.2.2000 is 22.60 million tonnes (data provisional).

(c) There is no retrenchment in CIL on account of coal imports in the country.

(d) No Inter-Ministerial Group has been formed on the retrenchment issue.

(e) Does not arise in view of (d) above.

Promotion of marble industry of Rajasthan

†2218. SHRI ONKAR SINGH LAKHAWAT: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Rajasthan have requested the Central Government to remove necessity of having mineral scheme for low value minerals like quartz, felspar, silica sand, clay, calcite, mica, yellow okar, red okar etc;

(b) if so, the details of the action taken by Government on it;

(c) whether Government are in favour of reducing excise duty for encouraging and promoting marble industry of Rajasthan; and

(d) if so, the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) No Sir.

(b) In view of (a) above does not arise.

(c) and (d) The excise duty rates for all items including those for marble are laid down by the Government as part of the annual Budgetary exercise. However the Government has constituted a Group on Marble development (GMD) in Septemebr 1999 to encourage promotion of marble mining and industry.

Aluminium ingot price increased by NALCO

2219. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Aluminium Company Ltd. (NALCO) has increased the price of aluminium ingot;

(b) if so, since when; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the reasons as to why NALCO increased the price of aluminium ingot?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) Yes, Sir. (b) The last increase was with effect from 1st February, 2000.

(c) NALCO has increased the price of Aluminium Ingots keeping in view the international price, domestic market scenario, the inventory position and the anticipated production during the financial year.

Shukla Commission report on development of coal sector in NE

2220. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) the salient recommendations of the Shukla Commission on development of the Coal sector in the North-East in terms of PM's special package; and

(b) the action taken target fixed and achievement made so far in implementing each of the recommendation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERALS (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) The recommendations of the Shukla Commission on development of the Coal Sector in the North East in terms of PM's special package are as under:—

(i) Steps should be taken to explore external market opportunities for North-East coal and an infrastructure plan, including roads and ropeways developed to exploit emerging opportunities.

(ii) Coal India should be charged with rehabilitating the private mining industry in Meghalaya in consultation with the State Government and private landowners.

(b) Action taken in this regard is as follows:

(i) Because of difficult geo-mining conditions and the geographical locations of the mines, the cost of coal production as well as the freight charges in the North East are very high. High sulphur content of the North East coal is another inhibiting factor. As a result of all these, this coal gets out priced in Bangladesh and other markets.